

Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing me a few moments to recognize the inspiring career of Mr. Jim Sampson. His work for Western New York's children and families is truly admirable, and I wish him the best in his retirement.

HONORING FARISH STREET
BAPTIST CHURCH

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 12, 2013

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Farish Street Baptist Church. Organized in 1893, Farish Street Baptist Church has been blessed by the vitality, imagination, and inspiration of its leadership.

The Reverend Elbert B. Topp served as pastor of Mt. Helm Baptist Church from 1888–1893, when, according to Patrick Thompson in his book *History of Negro Baptists in Mississippi*, “he (Topp) with 210 members came out and organized what is now known as the Farish Street Baptist Church.” The newly formed church held worship services in the Congregational Church, which was then located at the corner of Capitol and Lamar Streets. White Jacksonians would line the bridge to hear the choir sing, giving generously to the collections. Soon the infant congregation had enough money to purchase the lot at the corner of Farish and Church Streets. It was here that the newly organized congregation built the first place of worship—a frame structure. Lightning destroyed this building and it was replaced by a two-story frame structure. The second story was reserved for worship, with all other activities, including funerals, taking place on the first level. A fire, which began on Oakley Street and spread, destroyed the second building. Determined to minimize this threat in the future, in 1909, Reverend Topp led the membership in constructing a brick building. He pastored Farish Street Baptist Church until 1916.

Reverend Topp died on October 3, 1925. The October 9 edition of the *Advance Dispatch* carried a front page announcement of his death. Of Topp, Patrick Thompson wrote, “no member of the convention and state is more conspicuous and popular. Reverend Topp is good natured and full of life. True to his fellow preachers and has but few equals as a gospel minister.”

Reverend E. L. Twine, an Alcorn College graduate and teacher of mathematics, was called to serve the Church in 1916, and for three years, he labored faithfully. During that brief tenure, he encouraged the congregation to purchase new pews and to make a substantial payment on the church mortgage, which had been left from previous years. His pastorate was to be the shortest during the Church's first 100 years of existence. Because of his stately nature, Reverend Twine would be known by his contemporaries as the “Black Prince of Mississippi.”

In November 1919, the Church extended the call to Reverend Chester Arthur Greer. Reverend Greer had pastored and taught school in Arkansas and Mississippi, and at the time he was called to Farish Street Baptist Church, he was serving as pastor of Second Baptist Church in Oxford, Mississippi. He

served as pastor of Farish Street Baptist Church until November 1927. During those eight years, the mortgage was paid in full; the bell tower was completed; an annex was built onto the 1909 structure; a parsonage was bought; an old note of \$500.00 on Dr. Topp's salary, held by Brother C. C. Sims against the Church was redeemed; 40,000 bricks were bought and placed on the church grounds to be used in the construction of a new church facility; plans and specifications with an architect's rendering had been presented in the church conference on March 4, 1926, and had been approved without one dissenting vote; several hundred dollars were raised and negotiations for a loan of \$20,000 were initiated. However, in November 1927, just a little more than a year after Dr. Greer had presented those plans to the church, he resigned and moved to Fort Worth, Texas, to accept the pastorate of Mt. Gilead Baptist Church.

Reverend W. L. Varnado assumed the pastorate of Farish Street Baptist Church in April 1928. Perhaps Reverend Varnado will be remembered best as the only person to pastor Jackson's three historic black congregations—Mt. Helm, College Hill and Farish Street Baptist Churches. During his term of service, the membership increased and two rooms were added to the parsonage. Reverend Varnado was a great churchman. It was during his pastorate that a young Jackson State College student from the Class of 1927 was ordained to the work of the gospel ministry the future leader of six million black Baptists? Dr. Varnado resigned in October 1934 to accept a pastorate in Jackson, Tennessee.

Without fanfare, the man who had served diligently as the third pastor returned in January 1935, to begin his second pastorate. Reverend Chester A. Greer began a building program, which resulted in the replacement of the forty year old structure with a modern building, which still serves the congregation today. The ground-breaking ceremony was a joyous occasion. Mrs. Lillie Bentley and Mr. Turner M. Patterson, two of the original 210 members to leave Mt. Helm Baptist Church in 1893, participated in breaking ground for the new facility. Dr. Jacob L. Reddix, President of Jackson State College, Chairman of the Trustee Board of Farish Street Baptist Church, gave invaluable advice during the construction phase. At the laying of the corner stone, Jackson State College Band performed to the delight of the congregation. Dedication services for the newly constructed church building were held during the week of March 5–12, 1950. A renewed people joined hands with their sisters and brothers to praise Him Who is the great Builder and without Whom they that build, build in vain.

After serving for twenty-three years during his second pastorate, Reverend Greer was successful in retiring the debt and burning the mortgage before his victorious and faithful members. With his health on the decline, Reverend Greer decided to retire from the pulpit in March 1958. Reverend Greer was named “Pastor Emeritus” of the Church. Three decades of service to a great people had come to an end. The assistant pastor, Reverend G. W. Williams, supplied the pulpit until a successor was elected. Reverend Greer died on August 13, 1962.

During the summer of 1958, a young seminary teacher, Reverend S. Leon Whitney, came to Jackson to teach at the Mississippi Baptist Seminary. He was invited to preach to the congregation at Farish Street Baptist Church. Impressed with his preaching, on September 4, 1958, the congregation instructed the Pulpit Committee, chaired by Brother M. M. Hubert, to interview Reverend Whitney. On September 22, 1958, the Pulpit Committee made its recommendation to the Church. A meeting to vote on extending a call was set for the third Sunday in October. However, Brother D. T. Mason offered a motion that the rules be suspended and that Reverend Whitney be elected pastor that night. The motion carried and the church extended the call to pastor to Reverend Whitney. Thus began a term of service that lasted ten years.

Unlike his predecessors, Reverend Whitney did not inherit the financial debts of former years. He found a congregation ready for new leadership. Reverend Whitney served wisely and made many improvements in the order of service. Moreover, he rejuvenated the spirit of the Church and increased the membership. He encouraged the establishment of a centralized treasury. The baptistry was elevated, and the building was renovated and redecorated. This youthful, energetic preacher accepted the challenge and embarked upon an aggressive ministry of evangelism, stewardship and social concerns. It was these social concerns—the freedom rides, the sit-ins, the protest marches and the mass meetings—that helped shape the ministry of this congregation during the turbulent sixties. Yet, despite ten years of fruitful, positive and constructive leadership in the church and community, Reverend Whitney resigned the pastorate of Farish Street Baptist Church in May 1968, to accept the pastorate of New Prospect Baptist Church in Detroit, Michigan.

In June 1968, Reverend Hickman M. Johnson, Chaplain of Tougaloo College, was invited to serve as interim minister. On July 22, 1968, the church voted to call Reverend Johnson and on August 4, 1968, he preached his first sermon as pastor. On December 1, 1968, Reverend Johnson was installed as the sixth pastor of Farish Street Baptist Church. Reverend Johnson brought to the Church a strong capacity for effective organization. He recommended that the Church become incorporated and on November 13, 1969, a Charter of Incorporation was issued to Farish Street Baptist Church by the State of Mississippi. He labored for a continuous and consistent building program and established the necessary framework for the most diversified religious education and service-oriented programs in the Church's history. A 1969 church brochure described the proposed building addition as being “of contemporary design, functional, attractive and air-conditioned, with ample parking . . . the first floor includes: administrative complex—church office, pastor's study; fellowship-assembly hall, game room, dining room, kitchen; the second floor includes: education-nursery, ten large multi-purpose classrooms.” While improvements were to be made on the 1969 model, nevertheless, the functions on which this model were based remain unchanged: a) education, b) fellowship, and c) administration.

At the 1976 Annual Meeting, the Building Committee recommended that the Church authorize its officers to secure a commitment for

permanent financing in the amount of \$225,000. On February 10, 1976, a contract was signed with Charles Craig, project architect, to design and provide a set of working drawings. Invitations to Bid were tendered and proposals received from various contractors were tabulated and groundbreaking ceremonies for the new building were timed to coincide with the celebration of the Church's 83rd Anniversary. One year later, in May 1977, the Educational Building was dedicated. This would be the first of several major improvements to the physical property completed during the Johnson's years. Dr. Johnson is an administrator with great spirit; an historian who is cognizant of the importance of a people's heritage; a businessman with a vision. He is a theologian and a teacher, who strives daily to build an even stronger congregation at Farish Street Baptist Church—a congregation committed to serve this community.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Farish Street Baptist Church.

HONORING RUBEN ARGUELLES

HON. FILEMON VELA

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 12, 2013

Mr. VELA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Ruben Arguelles to express my deep appreciation for all that he has done for south Texas students.

For the last 23 years, Mr. Arguelles has dedicated himself to educating young people. He spent six years in the classroom as a teacher and 17 years as an administrator leading students, teachers, and staff. His commitment to the Rio Grande Valley is reflected in his service across several independent school districts (ISD)—Weslaco ISD, Progreso ISD, Mercedes ISD, and Santa Rosa ISD.

In every position he has held, Mr. Arguelles demonstrated a tireless focus on ensuring that children have access to the best possible education to prepare them for the future. His dedication also extended to providing a supportive school environment, improving the community, and bettering the lives of South Texas families.

In his last two years at Santa Rosa ISD, Mr. Arguelles faced a great personal challenge. Although he was diagnosed with cancer, Mr. Arguelles continued to serve as principal even as he underwent grueling treatment. Even in the most difficult of times, Mr. Arguelles remained focused on his mission as an educator.

On behalf of all those whose lives he touched, I rise to recognize the exemplary service of Ruben Arguelles. His dedication, even when faced with illness, is an inspiration to us all.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY AND NATIONAL SERVICE OF AUSTIN J. BURKE, PRESIDENT OF THE GREATER SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

HON. MATT CARTWRIGHT

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 12, 2013

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the career-long community and national service of Austin Burke, who is retiring this year as President of the Greater Scranton Chamber of Commerce.

Scranton, Pennsylvania in my district has been through a lot of changes since Austin Burke took the reins at the Chamber back in 1981. Mr. Burke helped lead the effort to transform Scranton's former industrial economy into a new economy that is better positioned to sustain jobs and growth throughout the 21st Century.

Reclaiming and re-using thousands of acres of leftover mining land has been a major accomplishment of the Chamber under Austin's leadership. Putting that land into new business use has created thousands of jobs and fueled economic growth in greater Scranton. Mr. Burke also worked closely with federal and local officials to bring the Steamtown National Historic Site to downtown Scranton. This was a key step toward improving the city's image and bringing in tourists. If we can bring back passenger rail service for both tourists and commuters, the connection between Scranton's past and future will be even more complete.

Austin Burke's counsel and ideas have been valued in both the Pennsylvania governor's office and the White House in Washington. He was a leader at the national level through his groundbreaking successes here in Scranton and his involvement with the U.S. Chamber on its nationwide initiatives.

Austin served in the Air Force in his earlier years, and he has always brought a strong sense of commitment, loyalty and professionalism to his work at the Chamber. He is an easy guy to look up to. Everyone in Scranton is indebted to Austin Burke for his many years of community development work, and I wish him and his family the very best for his retirement.

RECOGNIZING THERESA JEPSEN

HON. KYRSTEN SINEMA

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 12, 2013

Ms. SINEMA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask that my colleagues join me in recognizing Mesa Community College student Theresa Jepsen, recipient of a 2013 Cherokee A Nurse I Am Scholarship. Each recipient receives \$2000 toward defraying the cost of their nursing education.

Theresa was chosen for the scholarship on the basis of an essay she wrote in response to the documentary, A Nurse I Am. She was asked to consider aspects of cultural sensitivity demonstrated by nurses in the film, as well as to respond to how she would dem-

onstrate such sensitivity herself. Theresa wrote that "the nursing field requires a unique trifecta of emotional intelligence, adaptation, and cultural awareness . . . and it falls to the nurse to discover the client's cultural basis and the values therein in order to serve fully."

I share Theresa's sentiments and applaud her thoughtfulness. Nurses interact intimately with patients, serving them face-to-face, every day. It is of utmost importance that we train nurses who treat patients holistically, caring for them with competence, kindness, and respect. Nurses have the opportunity to positively impact patients' health and thereby overall lives. I congratulate Cherokee Uniforms and Mesa Community College for their support of Theresa and this admirable scholarship program.

Given her accomplishment as well as the support provided by Mesa Community College and the collaborating scholarship foundation, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Ms. Theresa Jepsen for her reception of a Cherokee A Nurse I Am Scholarship.

HONORING DIAMOND HAWK GOLF COURSE

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 12, 2013

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Diamond Hawk Golf Course as it is awarded the 2013 Small Business of the Year award by the Cheektowaga Chamber of Commerce.

Originally a hunting area, construction on the Diamond Hawk Golf Course began in 2004. The name Diamond Hawk reflects the land's history, combining "Diamond," an enduring and precious figure and the "Hawk," after the red-tailed hawks that frequented the hunting area.

Completed in 2006, the Diamond Hawk Golf Course is a par 72, 18-hole golf course. Its state-of-the-art facilities include a driving range, pro shop and an 8,000 square foot clubhouse. Diamond Hawk is widely regarded as one of Western New York's premiere golf courses. In 2007, Buffalo Spree rated the course the Top Public Golf Course in the area.

Throughout its development, one of the course's biggest supporters has been Sam Tadio. Sam's community service efforts are well-known in Cheektowaga. He has held volunteer positions with the Traffic Commission, Narcotics Commission and Police Commission. Reflecting Sam's altruism, the course hosts a variety of high school and junior golf tournaments, as well as charitable events.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing me a few moments to recognize the Diamond Hawk Golf Course and the great work of its advocates and employees as it is awarded Cheektowaga Chamber of Commerce's 2013 Small Business of the Year Award. Their commitment to their community and guests exemplifies the highest quality of small business in our country.